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ABSTRACT

A self-report Intervention Strategies Scale was developed in order to assess teachers' use of positive and restrictive discipline strategies with students who display hyperactive and aggressive behavior in the classroom. Pilot work produced a 26-item instrument using a 5-point Likert scale. An orthogonal varimax rotation was performed using ratings completed by 289 teachers from 21 urban elementary schools. The factor analysis extracted three factors, not two, which were labeled rewards, negative consequences, and severe consequences. The Intervention Strategies Scale is offered here as a new assessment tool that may be useful for inclusion in future classroom management studies, validation experiments, or item refinement projects. An appendix contains the scale. (Contains 2 tables and 11 references.) (Author/SLD)

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A New Self-Report Instrument for Assessing Teachers' Classroom Management Intervention Strategies

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Abstract

A self-report Intervention Strategies Scale was developed in order to assess teachers' usage of positive and restrictive discipline strategies with students who display hyperactive and aggressive behavior in the classroom. Pilot work produced a 26-item instrument using a 5-point Likert scale. An orthogonal varimax rotation was performed using ratings completed by 289 teachers from 21 urban elementary schools. The factor analysis extracted three factors, not two, which were labeled, "rewards," "negative consequences," and "severe consequences." The Intervention Strategies Scale is offered here as a new assessment tool that may be useful for inclusion in future classroom management studies, validation experiments, or item refinement projects.

A New Self-Report Instrument for Assessing Teachers' Classroom Management Intervention Strategies

Managing hyperactive and aggressive student behavior in the classroom is one of the most difficult challenges teachers encounter. Although teachers should be able to plan appropriate lessons, present new content clearly, and assign suitable practice activities (Hunter, 1982), they must also be able to create non-disruptive classroom environments in order to provide for optimal student learning (Doyle, 1986). Unfortunately, research shows that many teachers demonstrate difficulties in handling problem behaviors and establishing discipline (Browne & Payne, 1988; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978).

For years, many researchers have been recommending additional research into the processes by which successful teachers negotiate order in the classroom, but the research has been hampered by funding difficulties and the practical challenges of actually observing large numbers of teachers in action. The focus of this project was the development of a self-report instrument that could discriminate between teachers' recalled usage of positive and restrictive strategies with behavior problem students, (both ADD and conduct disorders).

Method

Although a general 12-item scale had been developed by Cunningham and Sugawara (1989), the items in that measure seemed inadequate to assess the possible scope of discipline behaviors that teachers commonly utilize. The pilot/developmental work for this instrument involved asking six elementary teachers to generate lists of possible teacher intervention strategies. The prompt was, "What are the motivation strategies and punishments teachers use when they have to control hard-to-handle children? Responses included items such as, "Write names on the board," "Let students earn rewards and privileges," "Send to the principal's office," etc. Subsequently, the list was refined and the strategies were rated (forced-choice) as "positive" or "restrictive" by six educational psychology graduate students and four classroom teachers. Personal warmth, encouragement, rewards and various positive motivational techniques were rated as "positive strategies," while specific punishments and negative consequences were rated as "restrictive strategies."

Thirteen positive and 13 restrictive intervention strategies were selected for the final 26-item instrument and ordered using a random numbers method. Positive strategies are items 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, and restrictive strategies are items, 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26.

Examples of positive items include:

- I have related lesson content to this student's special interests.
- I have allowed this student to choose his or her own rewards for good conduct.
- I have given this student a special job or responsibility in the classroom.

Examples of restrictive items include:

- I have benched this student during recess or lunch.
- I have required this student to do extra class work or homework for behavior infractions.
- I have had this student suspended from school.

After the pilot work was completed, the instrument was included in a questionnaire for a large study involving teacher efficacy and classroom management intervention strategies (see Melby, 1995). Other variables examined in that project included teacher attributions, various emotions, confidence, stress, and pupil control ideology.

In order to collect data on actual students, this study employed a method similar to that utilized by Medway (1979) and Christenson, Ysseldyke, Wang, and Algozzine (1983). These researchers surveyed teacher attributions using natural samples of students referred by their

teachers for psycho-educational evaluation. In a similar fashion, Tollefson, Melvin, and Thippavajjala (1990) used a structured questionnaire to ask teachers to describe a student with a pattern of low achievement. Both studies involved assessment of teachers' feelings and behaviors toward students.

In the present study, each teacher was directed to identify a student who had been in his or her class for at least four weeks and who was exhibiting the most severe behavior problem in the class. On the Intervention Strategies Scale, teachers were directed to recall and candidly report the frequency of their usage of certain intervention strategies on a 5-point Likert scale. Anchors were "never," "sometimes," and "often." Although the problematic possibility of obtaining socially desirable responses could not be completely avoided, this measure was uniquely designed to target not recalled general classroom management behavior, but situation specific intervention behavior. Each item was written to include the term, "this student."

It was predicted that the specificity of the prompt would provoke teachers' specific memories and that these specific memories might allow for greater reporting accuracy. Assurances of anonymity on the cover sheet and directions at the top of the form were purposefully worded to give teachers encouragement and permission to report the full range of rewards and punishments. See the appendix

for a copy of the Intervention Strategies Scale.

Data Source

503 survey packages were distributed to teachers at 21 urban elementary schools (K-6). A strong questionnaire return rate of 60% was achieved; 289 questionnaires were utilized for factor analysis.

Results

In order to assess the Intervention Strategies Scale and determine whether it indeed represented two factors and distinguished between what seemed intuitively to be "positive" and "restrictive strategies," a preliminary analysis of the sample of responses was conducted using a Principal Components Factor Analysis procedure. Departures from chance patterns in the scree plot of unrotated factors were used to determine the number of factors for rotation. Factor analysis was performed with an orthogonal varimax rotation (see SPSS Base Users Guide, by Norusis, 1990). Using the entire sample of 289 teachers, the analysis extracted three factors, not two, with eigenvalues greater than 1. (See Table 1)

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 2 displays the intervention strategy factor loadings from the rotated factor matrix. Factor 1, labeled "Rewards," clearly represents rewards, positive reinforcement, and helping strategies. An array of techniques including praise, demonstrations of interpersonal warmth, individualized counseling, and special instruction or consideration, loaded on this factor. Factor 2, labeled "Negative Consequences," is characterized by punishments, negative reinforcement, and a variety of disciplinary techniques such a removal of privileges, time out, and chastisement. Factor 3, labeled "Severe Intervention Strategies Punishments," is represented by harsher, more extreme disciplinary efforts such as banishment from the classroom, school suspension, and being sent to the principal's office.

Insert Table 2 about here

It can be seen that the factor originally labeled "positive strategies" was confirmed by the factor analysis and was renamed "Rewards," while the original "restrictive strategies" factor emerged as two factors, one factor seeming more moderate in degree, "Negative Consequences," and the other more extreme, "Severe Punishments."

Using negative consequences and severe punishments with problem students was found to be correlated with variety of variables such as lower teacher efficacy, higher stress, lower attributions for intentionality of misbehavior, lower expectancy of behavior improvement, greater anger, less liking, less confidence, more stress, and more custodial pupil control ideology. Contrariwise, using rewards with problem behavior students was correlated with higher teacher efficacy, greater liking of difficult students, greater confidence about being able to cause change with problem students, and more humanistic pupil control ideology. Path analysis supported the development of a model in which low teacher efficacy, mediated by anger and stress, predicts usage of severe punishments. (See Melby, 1995, for a full report.)

Discussion

Since, for most researchers utilizing large subject samples, the on-site assessment and quantification of teachers' disciplinary and classroom management behaviors is prohibitively expensive in terms of time, money, and human resources, the development of a self-report, paper-pencil instrument is extremely useful. Although the Intervention Strategies Scale generates teachers' specific recollections of strategies used with particular children (strengthening face validity), and allows strategies to be grouped into dimensions

(a technique to increase validity, recommended by Hook and Rosenshine, 1979), the reliability and validity of this instrument needs to be formally established. The Intervention Strategies Scale is offered here as a new assessment tool that may be useful for inclusion in future classroom management studies, Intervention Strategies Scale validation experiments, or item refinement projects.

Table 1
Factor Analysis of Intervention Strategies Scale: Eigenvalues for Three Factor Solution (Principal Components)

Factor	Eigenvalue
1	5.00742
2	3.74501
3	1.52077

Table 2
Intervention Strategies and Factor Loadings (Orthogonal Varimax Rotation)

Item no.	Factor loading	Intervention Strategy
		Factor 1: Rewards
15	.70	I have praised this student's improved behavior.
21	.70	I have given this student special smiles for encouragement.
9	.68	I have told this student that I like him or her.
20	.66	I have spent time to give this student individual counseling.
25	.66	I have given this student pats on the back or congratulatory hugs.
5	.60	I have written "Good News" notes to the student's parents for behavior improvement.
3	.57	I have let this student earn special rewards or privileges.
11	.55	I have allowed this student to earn his own rewards for good conduct.
19	.54	I have taught this student special self-monitoring strategies such as "Stop, Look, Listen."
8	.54	I have related lesson content to this student's special interests.
14	.53	I have offered this student a variety of rewards.
24	.51	I have given this student a special job or responsibility in the classroom.
4	.43	I have given this student work that provides a high degree of success.
		Factor 2: Negative Consequences
12	.67	I have threatened to call this student's parents.
2	.62	I have sent this student to a certain area of the classroom for punishment or time out.
22	.61	I have taken away this student's materials or privileges.
1	.59	I have benched this student during recess and lunch.
6	.58	I have written notes to this student's parents when the student misbehaves.
10	.58	I have given this student unsatisfactory marks for conduct or citizenship.
23	.49	I have used a sharp voice and reprimanded this student in public.
17	.45	I have written this student's name on the board for infractions.
		Factor 3: Severe Punishments
26	.68	I have sent this student to the principal's office.
18	.63	I have sent this student out of the room.
13	.52	I have had this student suspended from school.
7	.52	I have threatened to punish the whole class for continued individual misconduct.

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APPENDIX

Intervention Strategies Scale

Intervention Strategies

Teaching involves selecting and applying disciplinary techniques. One challenge is to determine which intervention strategies will work with individual problem students. Some children may respond to rewards, but others seem to need consistent consequences and sometimes punishments for misbehavior.

DIRECTIONS: Think about the student you rated previously. For each of the following interventions, **circle** the number that indicates how often you have used it with this student. **Please be as accurate and honest as possible.**

	Never		Sometimes		Often
1. I have benched this student during recess or lunch.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I have sent this student to a certain area of the classroom for punishment or time out.	0	1	2	3	4
3. I have let this student earn special rewards or privileges.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I have given this student work that provides a high degree of success.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I have written "Good News" notes to the student's parents for behavior improvement.	0	1	2	3	4
6. I have written notes to this student's parents when the student misbehaves.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I have threatened to punish the whole class for continued individual misconduct.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I have related lesson content to this student's special interests.	0	1	2	3	4
9. I have told this student that I like him or her.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I have given this student unsatisfactory marks for conduct or citizenship.	0	1	2	3	4
11. I have allowed this student to choose his or her own rewards for good conduct.	0	1	2	3	4

(continued on next page)

	Never		Sometimes		Often
12. I have threatened to call this student's parents.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I have had this student suspended from school.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I have offered this student a variety of rewards.	0	1	2	3	4
15. I have praised this student's improved behavior.	0	1	2	3	4
16. I have required this student to do extra class work or homework for behavior infractions.	0	1	2	3	4
17. I have written this student's name on the board for infractions.	0	1	2	3	4
18. I have sent this student out of the room.	0	1	2	3	4
19. I have taught this student special self-monitoring strategies such as "Stop, Look, Listen."	0	1	2	3	4
20. I have spent time to give this student individual counseling.	0	1	2	3	4
21. I have given this student special smiles for encouragement.	0	1	2	3	4
22. I have taken away this student's materials or privileges.	0	1	2	3	4
23. I have used a sharp voice and reprimanded this student in public.	0	1	2	3	4
24. I have given this student a special job or responsibility in the classroom.	0	1	2	3	4
25. I have given this student pats on the back or congratulatory hugs.	0	1	2	3	4
26. I have sent this student to the principal's office.	0	1	2	3	4